3:Drapkin D-5 (1934-1935) 1935
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rium existing between the number of individuals of both sexes, not only in the total number, but also at most of the different stages of life (45 adolescents of the two sexes, for instance); secondly, the large number of old women compared with the old men—only 4 old men over 50, but 18 old women, one of them almost 95 years old (Paulina Viriamo).

## DENSITY

Easter Island has an area of approximately 17,900 hectares. The natives have the use of only 2,000 hectares, for the other 15,900 hectares belong to the Produce Company, by virtue of a concession. If from these 2,000 hectares are deducted the government lands and such establishments as roads, the common, the church, school, cemetery, the land of the Commissioner, etc., the extent of the land actually belonging to the natives is reduced to 1,800 hectares, which results in a density of 4 inhabitants to a hectare.

The comparison between the census of Salmon in 1886 and ours in 1934 brings a realization of the rapid increase of the population, which has tripled in less than a half century. The portion of public land occupied by the natives is not one of the most favored for agriculture. If the increase in population continues according to the same rhythm the day will come when the establishment of future families will constitute a veritable problem.

## PURE-BLOODED AND MIXED-BLOODED INDIVIDUALS

To distinguish between Easter Islanders of pure and mixed blood is an undertaking not only difficult but indeed impossible. During the whole course of the nineteenth century the island was visited by a great number of ships, the crews of which, on account of the liberty of Polynesian customs, were able to have sex relations with the natives. To these occasional associations there have been added all those which have occurred after the foreign occupation.

It is easy to understand that under such conditions it may be difficult to make a distinction which can claim to be precise between the direct descendants of the old inhabitants and those of mixed blood. Nevertheless, in the hope of making a more or less correct classification, I have resorted to the following method. Taking as a basis the personal information supplied by the individuals themselves, and corroborated by the testimony of the oldest natives and those most reliable in the community, I have considered as pure those who for

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three generations back show no intermixture with foreign elements. By foreigners I mean not only Europeans and Chileans but Polynesians from other islands—Tuamotuans, Tahitians, and others.

Only 159 Easter Islanders, or 34.86 percent of the total population, can be considered of pure blood. The 297 others, or 65.14 percent of the population, show degrees of intermixture varying but evident. A detailed study of degrees of intermixture shows the following individuals with some foreign blood:

| | |
|---|---|
| Tahitian | 184 |
| German | 101 |
| French | 77 |
| Tuamotuan | 53 |
| Chilean | 46 |
| English | 31 |
| Chinese | 6 |
| American | 2 |
| Italian | 2 |
| Unknown | 12 |

The 12 whose mixed blood is unknown are natural children whose mothers have no certainty or not complete certainty as to the father. This fact has nothing extraordinary about it when one realizes the great sexual liberty which the native women enjoy.

The proportion of foreign blood varies for each one of these crossings from 1/2 to 1/16, that is to say, we have been able in many cases to search back to the fourth generation.

The exact percentage of foreign blood among 297 Easter Island crossings is clear from the following table:

| | Percent |
|---|---|
| Tahitian blood | 39.28 |
| Chilean blood | 12.90 |
| Tuamotuan blood | 11.49 |
| German blood | 11.08 |
| French blood | 10.00 |
| English blood | 8.47 |
| Unknown blood | 4.03 |
| Chinese blood | 1.20 |
| American blood | 0.60 |
| Italian blood | 0.60 |

If these two tables are set side by side one is struck by the fact that the mixtures with Chilean blood have fifth place in the table

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showing the number of individuals with mixed blood, but second place, immediately following the Tahitian, in the table of percentages. This apparent contradiction is explained by the recent influx of Chilean blood, which tends to increase, while Tahitian, German, French and other older strains have a tendency to diminish, so that the proportions of these elements are rather low.

## CIVIL REGISTRATION

The great freedom which prevails in sexual relations does not prevent frequent legal marriages. As a general rule, the natives marry young and a celibate over 30 years of age is an exception. In numerous instances widowed persons remarry, especially if still young, and there are widows who have had three or four husbands (Catalina Tori Makotahia, for example).

Therefore, even if one considers as celibates all the young people over 13 years, the percentage of married people remains always greater.

| | Individuals | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Married | 112 | 46.66 |
| Celibates | 94 | 38.74 |
| Widowed persons | 34 | 14.60 |
| Total | 240 | 100.00 |

## ILLEGITIMATE AND LEGITIMATE CHILDREN

From 1915 to 1917, following the creation of a government register at Easter Island, almost all the unions which had been given religious consecration were legalized and at the same time the greater number of the children legitimized. That is why we shall consider as illegitimate those children who were born out of wedlock after 1917 and those who were not recognized at that time.

Even with these reservations the number of illegitimate children is fairly high. It amounts to 96, which constitutes 21 percent of the total population.

## ILLITERACY

Public instruction in Easter Island until the past year was the most rudimentary. Long periods of no schooling at all alternated with more or less accidental sessions of class work. It was not until 1934 that a public school was organized, always dependent upon the

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possible to remove them at the right moment, the high eddying wind from the cliff tearing them to pieces as they dried.

While every endeavour has been made to ensure accuracy, it will be readily understood that it has been almost impossible to avoid all mistakes and omissions, especially when matters cannot be fully written up on the spot. These it is to be hoped will be rectified by our successors.

Finally, an appeal must be made for kind indulgence owing to the circumstances under which the text has inevitably been finished, which render it impossible to obtain friendly criticism or make personal correction of the proofs.

S.S. *Cumilo*, off Jamaica,
*Christmas Day*, 1920.

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## HISTORY, POSITION, AND PLAN OF THE VILLAGE.

On the summit of the extinct volcano known as Rano Kao, which forms the south-western angle of Easter Island, stand the old stone village and carved rocks of Orongo. There is as yet no clue to the date of the earliest houses or carvings, but the dwellings were occupied as lately as the sixties of last century, and the builder of one of the latest is said to have been remembered in recent times. The site was connected with a bird-cult practised in the islands, and the inhabitants awaited here the coming of a migratory sea bird, the Sooty Tern, which nested on some rocky islets near at hand. Such information as could be gathered about the bird-cult has been recorded elsewhere,[1] and it is proposed to deal here only with the existing stone remains.

On three of its aspects the mountain of Rano Kao has been worn away by the sea till its sides are almost vertical, and, in its outermost portion, only a narrow edge of rock separates the lake, which lies within the crater basin, from the Pacific Ocean. The village commences where the width of the rim, between the crater wall and the sea cliff, is about one hundred yards. It follows the diminishing summit for about two hundred yards and terminates very shortly before the narrowest part of the rim is reached, and where the breadth of level ground is only 30 to 40 feet (Plate III).

Where the houses begin the crater edge is somewhat higher than that of the cliff, and the dwellings lie, broadly speaking, in two rows which at one point overlap one another. The final houses are built amongst a group of rocks which are highly carved. All the houses face the sea, and are entered from that side. For the sake of convenience, the front, or seaward aspect, will be uniformly termed the "south" side; actually it varies somewhat, but is most generally south-west. The total number of dwellings is forty-eight.[2]

[1] See *Folk Lore*, December, 1917: *The Mystery of Easter Island*, p. 238.

[2] The numbers shown on plan reach forty-five, but in three cases, where a house has not been identified by the Surveyor, it has been inserted and the numbers duplicated.

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
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124 events on the island; it was very weird, but served its purpose, though there were initial difficulties. The heroine, for instance, was christened "Maria," but "there were," Parapina said, "three Marias on the island. Which was it?" and it was long before she grasped, if indeed she ever did so entirely, that the lady was imaginary. A certain sequence of events was somehow made intelligible to her. She was then induced to repeat the story, while it was taken down. It was copied out and next day read again to her for further correction. Every word and idea gained was a help in understanding local names and the native point of view. Before the end, in addition to using the language for the ordinary affairs of life, it was found possible to get simple answers direct from the old men, and understand first-hand much of what they said.

115 Any real success in intercourse was, however, due to the intelligence of one individual who was known as Juan Tepano. He was a younger man about forty years of age, a full-blooded Kanaka, but had served his time in the Chilean army, and thus had seen something of men and manners; he talked a little pidgin English, which was a help in the earlier stages, but before the end he and I were able to understand each other entirely in Kanaka, and he made clear to the old men anything I wished to know, and explained their answers to me. It was interesting to notice how his perception gradually grew of what truth and accuracy meant, and he finally assumed the attitude of watch-dog to prevent my being imposed on. Happily, it was discovered that he was able to draw, and he took great delight in this new-found power, which proved most useful. The tattoo designs were obtained, for example, by giving him a large sheet of paper with an outline of a man or woman, also a pencil and piece of candle; these he took down to the village, gathered the old men together in their huts in the evening, and brought up in the morning the figure adorned by the direction of the ancients (fig. 88). He took a real interest in the work, learning through the conversations much about the place which was new to him, and at the end of the time triumphantly stated, "Mam-ma now knows everything there is to know about the island."

128 It is proposed to unite the information gained from locality and memory, referring where necessary to the accounts of the early voyagers, and give as complete descriptions as possible

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of the primitive existence which continued on Easter Island till the middle of last century. It will be seen that the condition of the people on the coming of Christianity, as we were able to ascertain it, corresponded almost exactly with that described by the first visitors from Europe, more than a hundred years earlier. Such traditions as linger regarding the megalithic remains have already been alluded to earlier in this book, but attention will be drawn to the point whenever this line of research seems successful in throwing indirect light on the origin of the great works.

*Mode of Life.*—The present natives, in talking of old times, say that their ancestors were "as thick as grass," and stood up like the fingers of two hands with the palms together; a statement from which deduction must be made for pictorial representation. The early mariners never, as we have seen, estimate the population at more than two thousand, but the land could carry many more. Mr. Edmunds calculates that about half of the total amount (or some 15,000 acres) could grow bananas and sweet potatoes. Two acres of cultivated ground would be sufficient to supply an ordinary family.

Housing accommodation presented no great problem. Many slept in the open, and even to-day, in the era of Christianity and European clothes, a cave is looked upon as sufficient shelter. When on moving from our "town" to our "country" house we inquired where our attendants were to sleep, we were cheerfully informed "it was all right, there was a very good cave near Tongariki"—and this cave, called Ana Havea, became a permanent annexe to the establishment (fig. 124). Some of these caves had a wall built in front for shelter.

Houses, however, did exist, which were built in the form of a long upturned canoe; they were made of sticks, the tops of which were tied together, the whole being thatched successively with reeds, grass, and sugar-cane. In the best of these houses, the foundations, which are equivalent to the gunwale of the boat, are made of wrought stones let into the ground; they resemble the curbstones of a street pavement save that the length is greater. In the top of the stones were holes from which sprang the curved rods, which were equivalent to the ribs of a boat, and formed the walls and roof (figs. 84 and 85). The end stones of the house are carefully worked on the curve,

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## CHAPTER XVI

### NATIVE CULTURE IN PRE-CHRISTIAN TIMES (*continued*)

**Religion—Position of the Miru Clan—The Script—The Bird Cult—Wooden Carvings.**

### RELIGION

771 THE religion of the Islanders, employing the word in our sense, seems always to have been somewhat hazy,[1] and the difficulty in grasping it now is increased by the fact that since becoming Roman Catholics they dislike giving the name of "atua," or god, to their old deities; it only drops out occasionally. They 776 term them "aku-aku," which means spirits, or more frequently "tatane," a word of which the derivation is obvious. The confusion of ideas was crystallised by a native, who gravely remarked that they were uncertain whether one of these beings was God or the Devil, so they "wrote to Tahiti, and Tahiti wrote to Rome, and Rome said he was not the Devil, he was God"; a modern view being apparently taken at headquarters of the evolution of religious ideas. Both these words, tatane and aku-aku, will be employed for supernatural beings, without prejudice to their [128] original character, or claims to divinity; some of them were certainly the spirits of the dead, but had probably become deified; the ancestors of Hotu-matua were reported to have come with him to the island. They existed in large numbers, being both male and female, and were connected with different parts of the island; a list of about ninety was given, with their places of 776 residence. No worship was paid, and the only notice taken 782 of these supernatural persons was to mention before meals 264 the names of those to whom a man owed special duty, and

[1] Our impressions on this head are confirmed by a remark of Brother Eyraud. "Though I have lived in the greatest of intimacy and familiarity with them, I have never been able to discover them in any act of actual religious worship."—*Annals of the Propagation of the Faith*, Jan. 1866.